

Vol. 1

The United States Senate

Report of Proceedings

Hearing held before

Subcommittee on Economic and Social Affairs

of the

Committee on Foreign Relations

S. 759

TO PROVIDE AID TO PERSONS IN THE UNITED STATES
DESIROUS OF MIGRATING TO THE
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

July 17, 1957

Washington, D. C.

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C O N T E N T S

STATEMENT OF

PAGE

Mrs. Alberta Spain,
Secretary, The Peace Movement of
Ethiopia, 4451 State Street, Chicago,
Illinois, Accompanied By:
A. D. Baker,
5255 South Federal Street, Chicago,
Illinois

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TO PROVIDE AID TO PERSONS IN THE UNITED STATES
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Wednesday, July 17, 1957

United States Senate,
Subcommittee on Economic and Social Affairs
of the Committee on Foreign Relations,
Washington, D. C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:10 p.m.
in the Foreign Relations Committee Room, U. S. Capitol
Building, Senator Russell B. Long (Chairman of the Subcom-
mittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Long (Chairman of the Subcommittee)
and Langer.

Also Present: Alwyn Freeman, Staff Consultant, and
Peter N. Chumbris, Assistant to Senator Langer.

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Senator Langer (Presiding). The subcommittee will come
to order.

Let the record show that Senator Russell Long, Chairman
of this subcommittee, was to speak on the Floor and was unable
to be here to open the hearing. He has asked me as a member
of the subcommittee to preside today in his absence.

This is a hearing in connection with S. 759, a bill to provide aid to persons in the United States desirous of migrating to the Republic of Liberia, and for other purposes.

(S. 759 is as follows:)

Senator Langer. We have asked the Department of State to give us an opinion on this bill. Have we received that?

Mr. Freeman. Yes, we have, Senator. I have it here.

Senator Langer. Will you read it?

Mr. Freeman. All right. This is a letter addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations from Assistant Secretary Robert C. Hill, under date of February 28, 1957:

"The Department has given careful consideration to S. 759, 'To provide aid to persons in the United States desirous of migrating to the Republic of Liberia, and for other purposes,' and sets out below, as requested by Mr. Marcy's letter of January 24, 1957, its comments on this bill.

"The general objectives of this bill are the same as previous ones submitted to Congress annually by Senator Langer since he introduced the first such bill in the 81st Congress. Although S. 759 differs from its predecessors in that it does not provide for the potentially costly United States Government assistance to proposed emigrants to Liberia, this bill continues to be designed to achieve relatively large-scale migration of Americans to that country. There have been no significant changes in the political, social, and economic scene in Liberia which would indicate the desirability of changing the Department's stated views as they applied to the earlier bills. Despite satisfying advances in certain aspects of Liberian economic life as the result of substantial

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American private investment and United States technical assistance, Liberia is still greatly under-developed, with the majority of its people living at subsistence level. Therefore the Department continues to believe that Liberia cannot absorb any substantial number of immigrants and has need only for highly-skilled foreign technicians admitted on an individual basis. Emigration to Liberia of this type of resident is neither contemplated in nor provided for by S. 159.

"In view of these considerations, the Department does not believe passage of this bill would be advisable.

"The Department has been informed by the Bureau of the Budget that there is no objection to the submission of this report."

Senator Langer. At this time I am also making as part of this record the hearings we had in 1953 concerning this same matter.

Have you got those here?

Mr. Freeman. Yes, sir.

Senator Langer. The witnesses testified in favor of the bill at that time. Have you got that testimony?

Mr. Freeman. Yes, sir.

(The material referred to is as follows:)

COMMITTEE INSERT

Senator Langer. This bill is substantially the same as
the other one.

Now, will you call the witnesses?

Mr. Freeman. We have Mrs. Spain and Mr. Baker.

STATEMENT OF MRS. ALBERTA SPAIN
SECRETARY, THE PEACE MOVEMENT OF ETHIOPIA
4451 STATE STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
(ACCOMPANIED BY: A. D. BAKER, 5255 SOUTH FEDERAL
STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS)

Senator Langer. You are Mrs. Alberta Spain?

Mrs. Spain. Yes, I am, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Langer. What is your full name and address?

Mrs. Spain. Alberta Spain, Chicago, Illinois.

Senator Langer. How long have you been living there?

Mrs. Spain. Since 1928.

Senator Langer. Have you ever been in Liberia?

Mrs. Spain. No, I have never been there.

Senator Langer. Have you made a study at all of the situation over in Liberia?

Mrs. Spain. Yes, I have, different ones that I talked with, that I met, that had made a trip out there.

Senator Langer. You have talked with people that had been there?

Mrs. Spain. That is right.

Senator Langer. Have you studied S. 759?

Mrs. Spain. Yes, I have.

Senator Langer. And do you testify favorably, are you for it or against it?

Mrs. Spain. I am for it.

Senator Langer. Why?

Mrs. Spain. Because I believe that if the races are separated, it will save the black race and it will save the white race.

Our organization does not believe in mixing of the races nor of mixing of the schools. We are not in favor of it. We believe it will cause trouble in the long run, and we feel that if this bill is passed and the people can go there that are desirous of leaving here, and there are thousands of them who are willing to go, I do believe that it will save the black race and will save the white race, and that is what we are fighting for. That is my belief.

Senator Langer. Well, over in Liberia, as I understand it, you have mixed races because there are some, I understand, that are very black and those that are very light.

Mrs. Spain. Well, we are not concerned with those colors. It is the black blood, the color of the skin we are not concerned with; we are concerned with the black race as a whole.

Senator Langer. As a whole?

Mrs. Spain. That is right; that is what we are concerned with, not the color of the skin. As long as he belongs to the black race.

Senator Langer. The people you talked with are in favor of this bill?

Mrs. Spain. That is right. I have talked also with

natives of Liberia, from Liberia that are in Chicago at this time, and they are in favor of it.

And I believe that this bill is a solution to the race problem.

Senator Langer. Let me interrupt you. Senator Long has just come in.

Senator Long. Have we started taking testimony?

Senator Langer. Yes.

Senator Long. Go right ahead.

Mrs. Spain. Well, Senator Langer was asking me if I was in favor of the bill S. 759 and why.

Well, my reason, personally and speaking for our organization, is that I believe that the separation of the races is best. We do not believe in mixing of the schools, we do not believe in mixing the races, we are not for it, and I think this is the solution.

We have tried everything else and I do not see where there has been any progress ever made with anything else, and we believe that the separation of the races is the solution.

That is the purpose of our organization and that is why we are asking this Government for aid for those that are desirous to go back, not only to Liberia but any part of Africa that we can go. That is what we are asking.

Senator Langer. Could I interrupt?

Senator Long. Go ahead.

Senator Langer. Senator Bilbo introduced legislation similar to this, is that not right?

Mrs. Spain. That is right.

Senator Langer. And he gave many speeches on the Senate Floor in behalf of that bill.

Mrs. Spain. Yes.

Senator Langer. And I believe he wrote a book.

Mrs. Spain. Yes.

Senator Langer. Called "Black Boy," in favor of this kind of legislation.

Mrs. Spain. Yes.

Senator Langer. His theory was that the black people came over here involuntarily.

Mrs. Spain. That is right.

Senator Langer. And our Government should make provision for return to their homeland.

Mrs. Spain. Their homeland, absolutely.

Senator Long. I see. Now, how much money would this program cost?

Mrs. Spain. Well, at the present I really could not tell you. I don't know just how much the Government would provide.

Senator Langer. It would provide for a commission.

Mr. Freeman. There would be an administrative staff,

Mr. Chairman. The commissioners are paid at the rate of \$10,000 a year, three commissioners, and they have to have a

staff.

The bill originally introduced on this same subject provided for expenses to be paid by the Government. That has been eliminated by this bill, the expenses of financing. I assume that the financing will be done by private organizations, although that is not in the bill.

The State Department, I might add, Senator Long, since you were not here when it was read, the State Department has written a letter. They are opposed to it, and that letter is now in the record.

Senator Long. I notice that the Department has objected on the ground that -- well, for several reasons.

One of the arguments is that Liberia is relatively underdeveloped. It just occurred to me that colored people who might want to go to Liberia would be some of the very best people to help Liberia.

Mrs. Spain. That is right, absolutely.

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Senator Long. In other words, the colored people who went there and who had good education and good training could do a great deal of good for Liberia.

Mrs. Spain. That is what we want -- and not only Liberia, but other parts of Africa. We are not just asking for Liberia -- anywhere that they could send us, anywhere that we could go in Africa, any parts that are under-developed where we could go and help them develop.

Senator Long. As a matter of fact, I am personally convinced that if some of the more outstanding and abler colored people of this country went to Liberia, that would be a better program and would benefit that nation much more than this foreign aid business that we have, trying to help them -- this way they could help themselves.

Mrs. Spain. That is true. They need an opportunity. We want the opportunity for those people to go there, the masses. The higher -- well, I am afraid that they are not particularly interested in it, but the masses really want to go.

Senator Long. It is your belief there are a great number of people that would like to go?

Mrs. Spain. Sure.

Senator Long. And you have talked with a considerable number of people that want to go?

Mrs. Spain. Yes, that is true; that is right.

Senator Long. I have a letter here from Mr. Drew Smith, who is a very able attorney of New Orleans, supporting this legislation. It is addressed to Senator Langer, and I will ask that it be put in the record.

Senator Langer. Yes.

(The letter referred to is as follows:)

COMMITTEE INSERT

Senator Long. Are there any other witnesses to testify?

Mrs. Spain. Yes, Mr. Baker.

Senator Long. Will you proceed, Mr. Baker?

Mr. Baker. Well, while we are taking it from the educational standpoint, we believe that our girls and boys that are coming from school each and every day of every year -- we believe that their education, in our opinion, has grown to the point that this Government cannot place them in positions they are capable of holding, and we feel that if they had a chance in a government where there would be no limit, as the white boy has in this country, there would be a better opportunity for black men, especially in the Western Hemisphere, to look that way for their livelihood and for a living under their own flag and their own government.

And I think that Africa is the only place at this time that is appropriate and that we should be in that country to help develop it.

I notice that the gentleman said that the State Department, I believe he said, had rejected or objected to some going into Africa at this time, but if we could go into Africa and at this Government's expense, and if they would help us until we were able to stand on our own feet financially, for a certain length of time, after that I think we would be an asset to Liberia instead of a liability.

They would be going into that country, the masses, to

help build the country and make it what we want it to be.

In this Government, we know we are limited. We can go so high, a certain distance, and cannot go further; but under our own flag we feel that we could go as high as our ability would allow, and that is the thing we are trying to reach for, we want to have free access to every opportunity in life, not only just to a few.

We don't blame the other man and his own government for certain limitations. Maybe we would be the same way in Liberia or other places in Africa, because the ruler of the Government is the one that makes the law.

Senator Long. Yes. Well, I do think, especially in view of the fact that originally the colored people were brought here as captives and against their will, I think it would be an act of good justice for this Government to offer anyone who would like to go to Africa the opportunity to go there.

Mrs. Spain. That is right.

Senator Long. And there are a lot of people who like to be with the majority elements rather than be in a minority group.

Mrs. Spain. That is right.

Senator Long. And of course the colored man in Liberia would be with the majority.

Mr. Baker. That is right.

Senator Long. And his race would be in the majority, rather than the minority.

Mrs. Spain. Absolutely.

Senator Long. And a lot of people feel that way. I always liked to be in the majority group rather than to be one of the minority. And I guess that some of your people feel the same way.

Mr. Baker. That is right. We were brought over here against our will and we feel that the Government owes us transportation back. They take you over during war, they carry you over there and they bring you back, and we feel the same way, that we are entitled to that, to be carried back.

Through the years we have worked for about 250 years in slavery, and we feel that should be enough to merit us a passport back to Africa with certain means to take care of us for a certain length of time.

And after we got out of slavery we lived under certain conditions, we were offered a certain price and we worked for that price -- but when we first came over here we had no say, we had to live with what was put on us.

Senator Long. Senator Langer, would you be interested in amending this bill to make it broad enough to cover any part of Africa that these people would like to go?

Senator Langer. Well, the reason it says Liberia is that the Ambassador of Liberia appeared before this Committee and

said they could take 100,000, and they were not sure about other parts of Africa. I think an amendment should be put in because if they go to Africa and Africa does not want them, they can say so.

Senator Long. I am personally convinced that if 100,000 intelligent and industrious colored people from this country went to Liberia, that they would be of tremendous assistance to that country, and it would help enormously to develop that country.

As I see it, I think it would be better than foreign aid, because the people could do more for the country than the money that was spent.

Senator Langer. Mr. Chairman, at the last hearings about a year and a half ago, hundreds wanted to appear, hundreds, and we limited it to twelve witnesses. We had professors, we had some of the best educated Negro people, and we had some white people appear and they were unanimously in favor of the bill.

It was not reported out because Senator Barkley at that time received a communication from the State Department opposed to it.

Now, we could have had all of those people today, but they could not testify because of the rule in the Senate.

Senator Long. I understand that in this bill there is no provision that the United States would pay the transportation.

Senator Langer. We had that in the other bill, we did not put it in this one. But I do think we ought to have it in.

Senator Long. It seems to me this bill should be amended, for the United States to pay transportation expenses.

Senator Langer. Do you suppose, Mr. Chairman, we could have other witnesses Friday of this week?

Senator Long. Yes, I believe so.

Senator Langer. Today is Wednesday.

Senator Long. I think that if the Senate is in session, I would be glad to hold the hearing to hear the other witnesses.

Senator Langer. Will you tell all the other people?

Mr. Chumbris. Yes.

Senator Long. I believe that you have made a very good statement and a very good presentation for the bill. Do you care to add something more to what you have said?

Mr. Baker. No more, except that speaking about the unrest, this unrest that we have among the two races, we feel that would be one of the quickest and easiest ways to settle the proposition, that is, to separate the two races, and we feel that is the only way we will ever survive as races of people, we in our own country and the other fellow in his country, and then we can do business with each other and get along friendly, and we won't have so much racial strife as

we have today.

Senator Langer. What about the religion in Liberia, is it the same as the religion here?

Mr. Baker. Well, we are not so worried about the part of the religion. We believe that if we were in the country, the religious part of it would take care of itself.

What we are trying to do is to take care of the people as a whole, to bring them under a national system so that everybody belongs to one thing, everybody belongs to this government -- because when this government calls, everybody goes, regardless of their religion, and so we feel that if we were in Liberia and all of us were under the supervision of the government there, that that would take care of the situation.

Senator Long. I would like to make it clear, as far as I am personally concerned, in voting for this bill that I am not voting for it trying to urge or tell someone he should go to Liberia. That is his decision.

If he would like to go, then I think it is a matter of elementary justice that this Government should pay their transportation, and I think it is reasonable and a fair proposal, and I will certainly vote for it.

Senator Langer. Thank you.

I have a list of people for Friday.

Senator Long. Thank you. I have two statements for the record also.

(The material referred to is as follows:)

Senator Long. Thank you very much. I think you have made a good presentation.

(Whereupon, at 3:30 o'clock p.m., the hearing in the above-entitled matter recessed.)

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